

October 13, 2022

City of Mason
Mason City Council
6000 Mason Montgomery Rd.
Mason, OH 45040

RE: Ordinance 2022-70

Dear Mayor Spaeth and Members of Mason City Council,

The Mason Mile Project is a community led, market driven project. Our promise is to honor our history while building into the future a fresh, healthy and sustainable place for people to live, work and play.

The Mason Mile Project has a team of Activators who assist with implementation of the Mason Mile Guidebook, as well as a core team of volunteer leaders that consists of David Charpentier, Kacey Richards, Annie Droege, and Chris Heim. The project is housed within MADECDC which is a 501c3 public charity, and is governed by a four member Board of Directors comprised of Scott Jones, Randy Kuvin, John Kramer, and Kacey Richards. Administrative staff includes Sherry Taylor and Sidney Hayes.

Attached you will find an update on the efforts of our grant funding partnership agreement that was executed on August 9, 2022, with details through September 21, 2022. This was provided to City staff and the Downtown Committee of Council on September 22, 2022.

MADECDC is pursuing a master development framework for the Downtown Mason Mile. This framework aims to achieve defined boundaries, a market study that supports viability of uses and density goals, and identifies most important considerations given where the community is today.

Ultimately, a key objective is to help move investment and development forward, attract residents and businesses, and create an overall downtown experience as has been envisioned by the community. We've determined that the next phase on this journey is to bring in expert leadership in the areas of data gathering/planning, community engagement/facilitation, and marketing/placebranding, in order to meet our objectives.

We're thrilled to announce the private sector team who will work extensively over the coming year to come alongside the Mason community to help plan for a vision into reality. That team consists of the firms Randall Gross Development Economics (also referred to as RGDE) out of Nashville, Tennessee, Common Ground Urban Design + Planning out of Franklin, TN, and BLDG Branding out of Covington, KY.

RGDE was selected as the lead firm for their extensive experience in downtown revitalization, market analysis, development feasibility, organizational development, and strategic planning. RGDE has consulted to public, private, and non-profit organizations on nearly 650 projects worldwide over 34 years, providing market & financial analysis, land use economics, and strategic planning and outreach marketing services for the redevelopment and revitalization of downtowns and town centers. RGDE's work in our immediate region consists of the Downtown Lebanon Market Analyses and Strategic Plan which sought to help diversify the tourism product and overall retail mix and help establish a more viable and sustainable mixed-use community for Lebanon.

Common Ground Urban Design & Planning is an award-winning land planning and urban design firm that has completed over 100 projects in 22 states. Their name Common Ground is a reflection of their commitment to working side-by-side with communities to achieve the greatest outcomes in their planning efforts.

BLDG Branding specializes in branding and design, and brings with them a collective team of problem solvers, market makers and storytellers who value authentic brand experience and believe small starts can lead to big things. BLDG's work in our immediate region consists of the most recent rebranding of The Grizzly Golf & Social Lodge.

Our three focus areas of work outlined above have been combined into one team effort in order to maximize efficiency, quality, and the interface between them while minimizing cost to MADECDC and the community as a whole.

We're eager to begin the next step in our work of phase two to Organize, Envision, and Assess advancements for the Mason Mile. This next phase will require City participation and leadership, and we're looking forward to what will come from a deepening of our partnership between the government and the community. We anticipate a formal kickoff of the project with the consulting firms in the coming weeks, and will work with City staff on specifics and details.

We want to thank the City of Mason government and our community for partnering with us to make all of this happen. We are eager and excited to continue to build on all of the good work that's been done over the years and move at the speed of trust in the pursuit of progress.

Thank you,

MADECDC Board of Directors

Scott Jones, Board Chair
John Kramer, Past Board Chair

Randy Kuvin, Board Vice Chair/Treasurer
Kacey Richards, Director

ORDINANCE 2022-70 GRANT FUNDING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT UPDATES - 9/21/2022

Recitals	Status
1 Grant funds will be used for advancing the Mason Mile project, including community engagement, planning, marketing, administrative, and other project expenses. MADECDC anticipates supplementing grant funds with private contributions or other grant funds.	No grant funds have been utilized to date.
2 City grant funds will not be used to purchase equipment, real estate or real property or interest in such without prior written agreement	No grant funds have been utilized to date.
3 MADECDC will establish a Mason Mile project advisory council and will invite city participation for the duration of the Mason Mile Project scope	A framework for the AC has been developed and is awaiting input from our project consultant(s) once we have secured.
4 MADECDC representatives will meet regularly with the Downtown or other appropriate committees of Council to share progress, including financial statements and disclosures of City of Mason grant fund expenditures, as well as work product generated in support of the Mason Mile project and participating board and committee members pertinent to use of grant funds, and inform city leaders when additional support or resources are needed to advance the project	MADECDC reps have been to every DTC of Council meeting in 2022 (June meeting canceled, July meeting moved, August meeting moved). Written and verbal updates have been provided to the City Council since July 11 relative to ongoing work of the Mason Mile project.
5 MADECDC agrees to:	Status
5a Be incorporated as a nonprofit organization (as evidenced by articles of incorporation filed with the Ohio Secretary of State), have a current Statement of Continued Existence issued by the Ohio Secretary of State, and maintain tax-exempt status with the US Treasury	All filings are current - copies of files provided to CoM
5b Be Current with the State of Ohio- as evidenced by a Certificate of Good Standing	All filings are current - copies of files provided to CoM
5c Currently maintain by-Laws approved by the agency's Board of Directors	By-laws are approved and maintained
5d MADECDC shall hold harmless, defend and indemnify the City of Mason and its officers, officials, employees and volunteers from and against all claims, damages, losses and expenses including attorney fees arising out of the funding partnership described herein, caused in whole or in part by any negligent act or omission of the MADECDC or anyone for whose acts the MADECDC may be liable, except where caused by the sole negligence or willful misconduct of the City	Acknowledged and understood by MADECDC
5e Maintain a Project Advisory Council that is comprised of representatives from each of the service area's segments including residential, institutional, business owner, property owner, and economic stakeholders. Participation in the Council or in project efforts will not be restricted to or contingent on MADE Chamber membership.	A framework for the AC has been developed and is awaiting input from our project consultant(s) once we have secured.
5f Actively pursue community engagement and outreach efforts, methods and procedures to secure broad public input into its program development and implementation.	We have been building on prior efforts, including the implementation of the Mason Mile Activator team, the creation of a newsletter, building up social media platforms, and seeking outside expertise to assist us in the next phase of our work.
5g To approach and secure City awareness and assistance in selection of outside expertise such as engineering analyses, zoning code authoring, planning consultant, or other typical government functions.	MADECDC leadership approached and secured City participation in the outside expertise recruitment process of the planning consultants in early July, including through the invitation of specific firms the City welcomed to the table in 2021, and an open door invitation for us to send the information along to any other prospective partners or for them to pass along. We received four proposals from a total of nine firms, and out of respect for all of them, we have not disclosed the names of them, particularly for those who we have determined are not the best fit for the project advancement. We requested a meeting with the City staff on 9/2/22 to discuss proposed direction and next steps which took place on 9/21/22.
5h MADECDC is committed to best-in-class operational and organizational efforts, policies, and procedures, including the mitigation of perceived and real conflicts of interest. Employees, agents, consultants, officers, elected, or appointed officials of MADECDC will be subject to MADECDC Conflict of Interest policies and disclosures relevant to their specific involvement	Currently all employees, agents, consultants, officers, elected, or appointed officials affiliated with MADECDC have signed conflict of interest statements.

ORDINANCE 2022-70 GRANT FUNDING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT UPDATES - 9/21/2022

6	City of Mason agrees to:	Status
6a	Provide a grant of \$180,000 to provide funding in support of Phase 2 and 3 of the project including an aggressive public engagement effort	Funding received on 8/12/22
6b	Provide consistent participation on the Mason Mile Project Advisory Council. Cooperate with planning efforts and provide information, context, and appropriate resources for Mason Mile project efforts. Based on public engagement and joint efforts, identify and prioritize projects, studies or initiatives that may require additional funding.	A framework for the AC has been developed and is awaiting input from our project consultant(s) once we have secured.
6c	Cooperate on securing grants, private contributions or other funding to assist identified priorities	N/A as of 9/2/22
6d	Provide opportunities to meet with Council, appropriate committees of Council, or other City boards, commissions or staff to share progress, updates and further communication	MADECDC reps have been to every DTC of Council meeting in 2022 (June meeting canceled, July meeting moved, August meeting moved). Written and verbal updates have been provided to the City Council since July 11 relative to ongoing work of the Mason Mile project.
6e	Use City resources such as web site, newsletters, e-mail lists, and City facilities to encourage public participation in Mason Mile engagement efforts	Information has been provided to the City on the RFP process and Mason Mile Quarterly Meet Ups for the purpose of encouragement of public participation. It does not appear these efforts have been shared on City web site, newsletters, email lists, and City facilities as of 9/2/22.
7	MADE CDC and City of Mason both understand and agree that:	Status
7a	Many issues that are topics of the Mason Mile project and public engagement are local government functions. While the City anticipates discussion and recommendations on items such as zoning classifications or revisions, public infrastructure, utilities, transportation, regulations, tax rates or districts, etc., the City cannot substitute and is not contracting those responsibilities to an outside agency or inferring any commitments or preferences related to roadway alignments, right-of-way acquisition, or property acquisitions. Any recommendations will be used as part of the legal process (including formal notices, hearings at Planning Commission, Council and other appropriate bodies). The City's participation and funding should not be confused with existing adopted and public plans or obligations. City cannot be held responsible/liable for programs administered by the MADECDC.	Acknowledged and understood by MADECDC
7b	They will work cooperatively to focus on public engagement, building common consensus among various stakeholders, building awareness, enlisting volunteers, etc. Other ambitions will likely develop depending on direction of public engagement - surveys, web page, monitoring, events, additional expert studies or analysis may all materialize and require new partners, funding, or prioritization. The City and MADECDC intend a long-term partnership and ongoing cooperation to promote Downtown Mason to the benefit of Mason residents and businesses.	Acknowledged and understood by MADECDC
7c	The attached Exhibits Executive Summary: Downtown Mason Mile Project PHASE 2 GUIDEBOOK and Downtown Mason Mile Process and Phase Timeline for CoM Grant more broadly present the history of the Mason Mile Project with approach, ambitions, and possible items for additional discussion or action. Final priorities will rely on ongoing public engagement. While the exhibits capture the philosophy and intent of the Mason Mile Project it is not a comprehensive list or commitment from the current City grant or a list of stipulated outputs.	Acknowledged and understood by MADECDC

Timeline for Mason Mile RFP Process Updates - 9/21/22

Work has been happening since before 6/13/22, but for purposes of the grant, we began the timeline for the CoM reporting at the time of the legislation adoption.

Date	Task	Status
6/13/2022	Ordinance 2022-70 adopted by CoM Council	✓
6/14/2022	Mason Mile Activator Meeting	✓
6/23/2022	Downtown Committee of Council Meeting	Canceled
6/28/2022	RFP posted for outside expertise	✓
6/30/2022	Mason Mile Business Owners Meet Up	✓
7/6/2022	MADECDC approached CoM to secure City awareness and assistance in involvement of outside expertise	✓
7/13/2022	Ordinance 2022-70 in effect	✓
7/13/2022	City Council Meeting - MADECDC provided Mason Mile updates to City Council	✓
7/19/2022	Mason Mile Activator Meeting	✓
7/22/2022	Proposal submission deadline for firms	✓
7/27/2022	Update provided to Downtown Committee of Council	✓
7/28/2022	Downtown Committee of Council Meeting	Rescheduled
8/1/2022	MADECDC Board determined finalist list for interviews	✓
8/1/2022	Scheduled interviews with finalist firms	✓
8/4/2022	Mason Mile Quarterly Meetup #2	✓
8/8/2022	City Council Meeting - MADECDC provided Mason Mile updates to City Council	✓
8/9/2022	Grant Funding Partnership Agreement Executed with CoM	✓
8/9/2022	Interviews began with prospective partner firms in strategic planning, data gathering, marketing, community engagement, and placebranding areas	✓
8/12/2022	Funding received from CoM for grant	✓
8/16/2022	Mason Mile Activator Meeting	✓
8/23/2022	Downtown Committee of Council Meeting held with outside guests present and no time available for an update on the RFP process or Mason Mile project updates	✓
8/25/2022	Downtown Committee of Council Meeting	Rescheduled
9/2/2022	Reached out to CoM to schedule meeting to provide updates on efforts	✓
9/12/2022	City Council Meeting	Rescheduled
9/20/2022	City Council Meeting - MADECDC to provide Mason Mile updates to City Council	✓
9/21/2022	Meeting scheduled with CoM and MADECDC leaders to discuss updates on grant funding agreement obligations	✓
9/22/2022	Downtown Committee of Council Meeting	AHEAD
9/30/2022	Contracts signed and executed for outside expertise	AHEAD
10/1/2022	Organize/(En)Vision/Assess Phase begins with new members of project team	AHEAD
10/10/2022	City Council Meeting - MADECDC to make public announcements on results of RFP process, including name of firm(s) engaged	AHEAD

RFP EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR MASON MILE PROJECT

		Proposal	
Services Scope of Proposal		Company Name	Scale: 1-5
	Planning/Data		
	Facilitation/Community Engagement		
	Marketing/Placebranding		
	Multiple Areas (two or more)		
	Comprehensive (All three areas)		
	Services Scope Score		0
Notes			
	Pros		
	Cons		
	Questions		
Consultant/Team Qualifications		Company Name	Scale: 1-5
	Planning/Data Experience		
	Facilitation/Community Engagement Experience		
	Marketing/Placebranding Experience		
	Consulting Experience		
	Other project-relevant competencies		
	Availabile bandwidth		
	Qualifications Score		0
Notes			
	Pros		
	Cons		
	Questions		
Proposed Approach		Company Name	Scale: 1-5
	Planning/Data Experience Structure		
	Facilitation/Community Engagement Structure		
	Marketing/Placebranding Structure		
	Comprehensive (All three areas) Structure (if applicable)		
	Planning/Data Experience Understanding of Needs		
	Facilitation/Community Engagement Understanding of Needs		
	Marketing/Placebranding Understanding of Needs		
	Comprehensive (All three areas) Understanding (if applicable)		
	Comprehensive Understanding of Mason Mile Project Approach		
	Presentation of Proposal		
	Proposal Score		0
Notes			
	Pros		
	Cons		
	Questions		
Deliverables Addressed/Included		Company Name	Scale: 1-5
	Planning/Data Deliverables		0
	Area of interest established w/clearly defined boundaries		
	Baseline of the defined area established		
	SMART goals including residential and density goals		
	Comprehensive use of realistic funding mechanisms identified and recommended		
	Approach to identify intersection of quantitative/qualitative data including use of prior gathered data		
	Included a plan for integrating work with facilitation/community engagement scope		

RFP EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR MASON MILE PROJECT

RFP EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR MASON MILE PROJECT		Proposal	
Facilitation/Community Engagement Deliverables			0
Approach for structuring engagement/planning process to best inform the guidebook to best capture quantitative/qualitative info translate into action			
Action plans built in reality taking goals & feasibility into context			
Prior strategy incorporation that have supported other CDC's (NPO's) over long term horizon			
Design and implementation of effective programs to test the market with community led ideas			
Facilitate meetings as needed (primarily a support role to project manager/leads and not "the face"			
Plan for keeping Mason Mile guidebook on track strategically			
<i>*Structuring messaging for project manager/leads to educate the public, seek answers to questions in the guidebook, conclusion summarize useful info, set expectations for upcoming public meetings/conversations</i>			
Included a plan for integrating work with planning/data gathering and marketing/placebranding scopes			
Marketing/Placebranding Deliverables			0
Support initial standup of comms strategy and implementation needs based on guidebook			
Create demand and identity for business district through placebranding strategies			
Fast think to aggregate public opinion and findings from planning/data and facilitation/community engagement work			
Long term outlook on theme/brand creation for the Mason Mile			
Included a plan for integrating work with planning/data and facilitation/community engagement scope			
All Areas Deliverables			0
Acknowledged pre-meetings with MADECDC Board, Staff, and Core Team to clarify desired expectations and desired outcomes			
Acknowledged review relevant documents identified by Board and Staff			
Acknowledged working with Project Advisory Council			
Comprehensive Understanding of Deliverables			0
Vision, direction, and brand established for the Mason Mile leading to conceptual master development plan/framework with SMART and community shepherded goals			
Deliverables Score			0
Notes			
Pros			
Cons			
Questions			
Budget		Company Name	Scale: 1-5
Planning/Data Budget - \$80,000			
Facilitation/Community Engagement Budget - \$35,000			
Marketing/Placebranding Budget - \$25,000			
Comprehensive (All three areas) Budget (if applicable) - \$140,000			
Other Optional Fees/Services - Design (\$5,000)			
Additional Fees/Services (i.e., travel expenses) - \$0			
Total Proposal Budget /Range - \$140,000 - \$145,000			
Budget Score			0
Notes			
Pros			
Cons			
Questions			

RFP EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR MASON MILE PROJECT

Other Criteria		Proposal	
		Company Name	Scale: 1-5
	Location of firm(s)		
	Adaptability to MADECDC Scope		
	Prior Experience with MADECDC		
	Prior Community/Project Experience		
	Cultural Fit		
	Alignment with organizational goals and values		
	Timeline to completion		
	Interview Score		
	Other Criteria Score		0
Notes			
	Pros		
	Cons		
	Questions		
TOTAL SCORE		Company Name	0

Scale of 1-5: 1 being lowest, 5 being highest

Scores are automatically summed based on scale # given for each line item

Total Score factors in all numbers on the scale